



Friends of Seven Islands State Birding Park Kicks Off

Wouldn't it be a great feeling to know that one of the best birding destinations in all the US is right here in Knox County, Tennessee? That possibility has been growing by the day and it received a big boost with the kickoff of its new friends group. Friends of Seven Islands State Birding Park is a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to support the park in its mission. Clearly one of the main objectives of the park is to become a nationally renowned birding destination.

The new friends group will assist the park in a number of ways. It will be raising funds to help the park carry out many different projects. One way it is raising money is by taking memberships. The friends group will also help manage volunteers that will help out at the park in many ways. A third way the friends group will provide assistance to the park is with education and community outreach.

KTOS and the Friends of Seven Islands State Birding Park also have the opportunity to partner and help the park in several ways. There are numerous birdhouses that need to be constructed, installed, and monitored — KTOS members are needed to help carry this out. Monthly bird walks are co-lead by members of both the friends group and KTOS. As time goes on it is expected that more and more educational field trips for children will take place at the park and hopefully KTOS will be involved.

Please take the time to go check out the website at friendsofsevenislands.com. You can find an application for membership as well as a form you can complete if you want to volunteer. The parks needs your help so please consider getting involved, and while doing so enjoy the number one year round birding site in East Tennessee.

October Meeting: “The Hoffs’ Quick Birding Trip to Jamaica”

Please join us on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 for a special presentation by Ron Hoff. Ron has served as president of both TOS and KTOS. He and Dollyann Myers are quietly setting worldwide bird count records and having fun doing it. A quick trip to Jamaica was supposed to yield 26 lifers. In the end, they saw 22, but it wasn't easy. Come hear about their adventure and enjoy the photographs they took.

The KTOS meeting begins at 6:45 pm in Room 118 of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. For directions, visit the meetings page on the KTOS website at: www.tnbirds.org/chapters/knoxvill/KTOS_Meetings.html.

Monarch Tagging and Butterfly Foray

Enjoy the wonder and beauty of flying flowers as we search the park for monarchs and other butterflies at the Seven Islands State Birding Park. To help scientists understand the monarch migration, we'll put tracking tags on the monarchs we are able to catch. Kids of all ages are welcome. Meet at the Bluebird Barn (near the park entrance) at **1:00 p.m. on October 4, 2015**. We will take a short hike (1—2 miles) through the park to find butterflies, so don't be late or you might miss us. A limited number of butterfly nets will be provided, but if you have your own, please bring it. Please do not wear insect repellent, and avoid sunscreen if you want to touch butterflies. Sturdy shoes are recommended. For more information, e-mail: smcgaffin@knoxville-zoo.org.



Monarch Butterfly.

Loggert
Shrike
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Presidential Perch

If you missed our September picnic at Ijams, you missed another spectacular spread. We ate well! (KTOS also stands for Knoxville's Taste of Savories, you know.) Many thanks to all who worked to bring it to pass. We appreciated being joined by Jessica King with WVA who is developing plans to spruce up Sharp's Ridge and who covets our input. New member Linn Stilwell also tasted her first potluck with us. Welcome Linn!

Merikay and I met with Ijams about the future of the Wonder of Hummingbirds Festival. They agreed to take the torch from Billie and chair the festival. Our contact will be Education Coordinator, Jennifer Roder, jroder@ijams.org, (865) 577-4717, ext. 130.

I hope everyone has enjoyed fall migration so far. If you haven't had the opportunity, fret not. There is more to come. Our hawk watch on the Foothills Parkway produced more warblers than hawks, but we were graced with near flybys of an adult Bald Eagle and three Red-headed Woodpeckers. More hawks should continue through October, but the Broad-winged hawks will have passed by when you read this. The Peregrine falcon has taken up winter residence on Broadway Ave. in Maryville for the fifth year. Partial to its building perches, I have dubbed him or her "Mason Perry."

Sparrows are already arriving and passing through. If you are very fortunate, you may see a Clay-colored Sparrow like the one pictured in this issue that was banded at Seven Islands in September. There are more than a dozen sparrows possible in East Tennessee. Learn their distinguishing characteristics at Seven Islands on the October 17, 2015.

Meanwhile, get out and enjoy the changing bird seasons. Plus, remember to keep your hummer feeders going. Who knows what western species might show up? I've seen three non-Ruby-throated hummingbird species in the off season in East Tennessee. How about you?

Happy birding,

Tom Howe

Get Out and Get Birding! September Field Trips

Seven Islands State Birding Park
Saturday, October 17, 2015 @ 8:00 a.m.
Leader: Tom Howe, (865) 407-9620;
blountbirder@gmail.com.

Meet at the parking lot. See www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/seven-islands for location.

Kingston Steam Plant, Swan Pond Rd.
Thursday, October 22, 2015 @ 9:00 a.m.
Leader: Tony King, (865) 988-6172;
tonytheking1027@aol.com

Meet at the new visitor's overlook Take I-40 to the Midway exit; head south; turn left on Hwy 70, then left on Swan Pond Rd, under the interstate. If you pass the rail road tracks, you have gone too far!

Cove Lake State Park, Caryville, Tenn.
Saturday October 31, 2015 @ 8:00 a.m.
Leader: Tom Howe, (865) 407-9620;
blountbirder@gmail.com.

Meet at the picnic area. See www.tnstateparks.com/parks/about/cove-lake for location.

Welcome New Members

Please welcome the following new members: Linn Stilwell, Ron Wilson, Jason & Kayla Darby, Steve & Colby Grossbard, and Hollis Hebbel & Juan Perez



Morton Massey, Clay-colored sparrow at Seven Islands State Birding Park.

ICF: “Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe” Project

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is located in Baraboo, Wisconsin. By their international name they have offices in China, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, South Africa, Zambia, and in Corpus Christi, Texas in the US. The ICF has 45 staff members and a network of hundreds of specialists working in over 50 countries on 5 continents. The ICF management have tackled the ambitious task of monitoring the 15 Crane species world wide. The only complete collection of all Crane species ever assembled are housed at Baraboo, Wisconsin — well worth a visit.

Why are we blessed with the ICF located in Wisconsin versus Asia? Because the one crane species in danger of extinction resides in US. In 1941 there were only 16 Whooping Cranes left in the world. They only occur in the US. In 2015 there are approximately 600, or in other words, 300 in the Texas to Wood Buffalo Canada flock, 100 in Eastern Migratory Population, 50 in Louisiana and the remainder in Florida, zoos, and private collections. This magnificent bird has made a slow recovery, but more needs to be done.

To address this issue the ICF management has developed a plan titled “Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe.” In a nutshell, the ICF is horrified by the number of Whooping Cranes that have been shot in the last fifteen years. Twenty percent (20 %) of the flock lost to gunfire. The ICF has proposed raising \$150,000 for the program “Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe.”

The way the money will be spent is to create communities that care, involve citizen “Whooper Watchers” in protection, engage hunters in Whooping Crane Conservation, and increase negative consequences for shooting a Whooping Crane. These ideas will take time to develop and deliver, but will make us all more aware of the beautiful Whooping Cranes.

What has all this got to do with East Tennessee? For the first eight years that Operation Migration led Cranes to Florida they passed through East Tennessee landing at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge. Whooping Cranes became familiar with Hiwassee and felt at home even though outnumbered by Sandhill Cranes. Hiwassee was the place to go to see a “Lifer.” Ken Dubke organized the first Crane festival at Hiwassee. Then a more westerly path was chosen for the migration through Tennessee for safety reasons. The older Whooping Cranes still return to Hiwassee, but one winter on the migration with Operation Migration the weather halted the migration in North Alabama. Those cohorts ended up at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Alabama instead of flying on to Florida. So now Wheeler has become “The” place to see Whoopers in winter. This fact has led ICF to send a staff member, Liz Condon, to Wheeler. She now has the burden to make “Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe” effective in the Whooping Crane Migration corridor of Tennessee and Alabama.

The aforementioned preamble explaining the need for funds. Ken Dubke, KTOS member since 1958, found the \$10,000 check which will be forwarded to ICF through Liz Condon.

Bird On! Tony King, Certified Craniac, (865) 988-6172

ICF Donation



Billie Cantwell

Tony King (left), certified craniac, presenting a check to Carole Gobert (center), KTOS treasurer, witnessed by Tom Howe (right), KTOS President, at Ijams Picnic on Wednesday, September 2, 2015.

The check for \$10,000 was produced by Ken Dubke, Signal Mountain, Tennessee, who forwarded it to Tony as proxy. The anonymous donation will be added to the J. B. Owen Fund before being forwarded to TOS on October 3, 2015 at the Fall Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. At that time the funds will be forwarded to the International Crane Foundation for their ongoing “Keeping Whooping Cranes Safe” initiative.

KTOS membership: Join or renew by mailing your annual dues to Carole Gobert, 1304 Barcelona Drive, Knoxville, TN 37923. Dues levels: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13/student (high school or younger), or TOS life membership for \$450 with \$8 annual fee to Chapter.



www.tnbirds.org/KTOS.html

**2015 — 2016
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POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to: *through the biKNOXulars*, 725 Mountain Pass, Knoxville, TN 37923

Name that Bird



Do you need to brush up on sparrow identification — or perhaps make your first attempt at it? Sparrows give all of us trouble at times. Many of us birders still relegate them to the proverbial “little brown bird.” Well, hopefully we can at least begin to rectify that situation this month. Join us at Seven Islands State Birding Park on October 17, 2015 for a field trip dedicated to unraveling some of the mystery behind distinguishing one sparrow species from another. See the field trip section for additional details.